MISSISSIPPI DEMOCRAT.

"THAT GOVERNMENT IS BEST WHICH GOVERNS LEAST."

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Miscellany.

NETTLE BOTTOM BALL.

BY "SOLITAIRE"—[J. S. ROBB, ESQ.]

"Well, it *are* a fact," said Jim Sikes, "that I promised to tell you how I cum to git out in these Platte diggins, and I speculate you mout as well have it at onst, kase it's bin troublin' my conscience amazin' to keep it kiver'd up. The afarr raised jessy in Nettle Bottom, and old Tom Jones's *yell*, when he swore he'd 'chaw me up,' gives my meat a sprinklin' of ager whenever I think on it.

"You see thar war a small town in Illinise, that some speculators started near Nettle Bottom, cos thur wur a spontaneous salt lick in the diggins, and no sooner did they git it agoin' and build some stores and groceries thar, than they wagon'd on from Cincinnate and other up-stream villages, a pacel of fellers to attend the shops, that looked as nice, all'ays, as if they wur goin' to meetin' or on a courtin' frolic; and 'salt their picters,' they wur etarnally pokin' up their noses at us boys of the Bottom. Well, they got up a ball in the village, jest to interduce themselves to the gals round the neighborhood, and invited a few on us to make a contrary picter to themselves, and so shine us out of site by comparison. After that ball, thar wasn't any thin' talked on among the gals but what nice fellers the clerks in Equality wur, and how nice and slick they wore their *har*, and their shiny boots, and the way they stirrup'd down their trowsers. You could'nt go to see one on 'em that she wouldn't stick one of these fellers at you, and keep a talkin' how slick they looked. It got to be perfect pizen to hear of, or see the critters, and the boys got together at last to see what was to be done—the thing had grown perfectly alarmin'. At last a meeting was agreed on, down to old Jake Bent's.

"On next Sunday night, instead of takin' the gals to meetin' whar they could see these fellers, we left 'em at home, and met at Jakes, and I'm of opinion thar was some congregated wrath thar—whew! wasn't they?

"'H-ll and scissors!' says Mike Jelt, let's go down and lick the whole town, *rite strait!*'

"'No!' hollered Dick Butts, 'lets katch these slick badgers comin' out of meetin', and tear the hide and feathers off on 'em!'

"'Why d-n 'em, what d'ye think, boys,' busted in old Jake, 'I swar if they aint learnt our gals to wear *starn cushions!* Only this mornin' I caught my darter Sally tyin' it round her. She tho't I was asleep, but I seed her, and I made the jade repudiate it. and *no mistake—quicker!*'

"The boys took a drink on the occasion, and Equality town was slumberin', for a short spell, over a contiguous yearthquake. At last one of the boys proposed before we attacked the town, that we should get up a ball in the Bottom, and jest outshine the town chaps, all to death, before we swallowed 'em. It was hard to gin in to this proposition, but the boys come to it at last, and every feller started to put the farr agoin'.

"I had bin a long spell hankerin' arter old Tom Jones' darter, on the branch below the bottom, and she *was* a critter good for weak eyes—maybe she had'nt a pair of her own—well, if they warnt a pace of movin' light-houses, I wouldn't say it—there was no calculatin' the extent of handsomeness of the family that gal could bring up around her, with a feller like me to look arter 'em. Talk about gracefulness, did you ever see a maple saplin movin' with a south wind? it war'nt a crooked stick to compar' to her; but her old dad was *awful*. He could jest lick anythin' that said *boo*, in them diggins, cat-swar Satan, and was cross as a *she-bar* with cubs. He had a little hankerin' in favor of the fellers in town, too, for they gin him presents of powder to hunt with, and he was precious fond of usin' his shootin' iron. I detarmined, anyhow, to ask his darter, Betsey, to be my partner at the Nettle Bottom Ball.

"Well, my sister, Marth, made me a an new pair of buckskin trowsers to go and rile my pictur ef she didn't put stirrups to 'em to keep 'em down. She said *straps* wur the fashion, and I should ware 'em. I jest felt with 'em on as ef I had somethin' pressin on me down—all my joints were sot tight together, but Marth insisted, and I knew I could soon dance 'em off, so I gin in, and started off to the branch for Betsey Jones.

When I arriv', the old feller wur sittin' smokin' arter his supper, and the younger Jones's wur sittin' round the table takin' theirs. A whappin' big pan of *mush* stood rite in the centre, and a large pan of milk beside it, with lots of corn bread and butter, and Betsey was helpin' the youngsters, while old Mrs Jones sot by admirin' the family collection. Old Tom took a hard stare at me, and I kind a shook, but the *straps* stood it, and I recovered myself, and gin him as good as he sent, but I wur near the door, and ready to break if he show'd fight.

"'What the h-ll are you doin' in *disgise?*' says the old man,—he swore dreadful—'are you comin' down here to steal?'

"I riled up at that. Says I, 'ef I wur comin' for sich purpose, you'd be the last I'd hunt up to steal off on.'

"'You're right,' says he, 'I'd make a hole to light your innards, ef you did,' and the old savage chuckled. *I* meant because he had nothin' worth stealin' but his darter, but he tho't 'twas cos I was afeard on him.

"Well, purty soon I gether'd up and told him what I cum down fur, and invited him to cum up and take a drink and see that all went on rite. Betsey was in an awful way fur fear he wouldn't consent. The old 'oman here spoke in favor of the move, and old Tom thought of the licker and gin in to the measure. Off bounced Betsey up a ladder into the second story, and one of the small gals with her to help put on the fixups. I sot down in a cheer, and fell a talkin' to the old 'oman. While we wur chattin' away as nice as relations, I could hear Betsey makin' things stand round above. The floor was only loose boards kivered [illegible] wide jice, and every step made 'em shake and rattle like a small hurricane. Old Tom smoked away, and the young ones at the table would hold a spoonful of mush to their mouths and look at my straps, and then look at each other and snigger, till at last the old man seed 'em.

"'Well, by gun flints,' says he, 'ef you ain't makin' a josey——'

"Jest at that moment somethin' gin way above, and may I die ef Betsey Jones, without anything on yeath on her but one of them *starn cushions*, didn't drop rite through the floor, and sot herself, cushion and all, *cochunk flat into the pan of mush!* I jest tho't fur a second, that heaven and yearth had kissed each other, and squeezed me between 'em. Betsey squealed like a 'scape pipe—a spot of the mush had spattered on the old man's face and burnt him, and he swore dreadful. I snatched up the pan of milk and threw it over Betsey to cool her off—the old 'oman knocked me sprawlin' fur it, and away went my *straps*. The young ones let out a scream, as if the infernal pit had broke loose, and I'd jest gin half my hide to have been out of the old man's reach. He did *reach* fur me, but I lent him one with my half lows on the smeller that spread him, and maybe I didn't leave *sudden!* I didn't see the branch, but as I soused through it I heerd old Tom Jones swar he'd '*chaw me up* ef an inch big of me was found in them diggins in the mornin'.'

"I didn't know fur a spell where I was runnin', but hearing nuthin behind me, I slacked up, and jest considered whether it was best to go home and git my duds strait, and leave, or go to see the ball. Bein' as I was a manager, I thou't I'd go have a peep through the window, to see ef it cum up to my expectations. While I was lookin' at the boys a goin' it, one on 'em spied me, and they hauled me in, stood me afore the fire to dry, and all hands got round me, insistin' on knowin' what was the matter. I ups and tells all about it. I never heerd such laffin, hollerin', and screamin' in all my days.

"Just then my trowsers gin to feel the fire, and shrink up about an inch a minit, and the boys and gals kept it up so strong a laffin at my scrape, and the pickle I wur in, that I gin to git riley, when all at onst I seed one of these slick critters from town, rite in among 'em, hollerin' wus than the loudest.

"'Old Jones said he'd chaw you up, did he?' says the town feller, 'well, he all'ays keeps his word!'

"That minit I biled over. I grabbed his slick *har*, and maybe I didn't gin him *scissors!* Jest as I was makin' him a chawed specimen, some feller hollered out —'*don't let old Jones in with that ar rifle!*' I didn't hear any more in that ere bottom! —lightnin' couldn't a got near enough to swinge my coat tail! I jump'd that winder as easy as a bar 'ud go through a cane brake; and cuss me if I could'nt hear the grit of old Jones's teeth, and smell his glazed powder, until I crossed the Massissippi!"

Marrying a lady for her beauty, is like eating a bird for its singing.

IMPORTANT QUESTION.

Are the evils and extent of the vice of Intemperance, known to and appreciated by society?

We answer this question in the negative. The extent of this vice is not known. The evils consequent on its indulgence are not appreciated. Why? Because the *custom* has made us callous to the evil. We see men crowding the taverns by scores—we see men reeling in the streets—we can smell them afar off, with the fiery serpents yet hissing red hot in their throats—but we are not shocked by this dreadful spectacle, because we see it every day. What we become accustomed to see, fails to make a proper impression on the senses. It is custom, and we heed it not. It is the same with the vices and crimes that intoxications leads to. We hear so often of murder, suicide, and other dreadful consequences of intemperance, that we grow callous to their enormity! All society burns and crackles with the flame of alcohol—but we fail to be shocked by it, because it is *familiar*. A thousand dens vomit forth their reeking votaries, to annoy the public, disturb the peace, fill the air with obscene words, muttered curses, incipient ravings, blasphemous maledictions; we cross the street to avoid the rum lunatic, lest he should soil our apparel, but we are no longer shocked in the heart with this monstrous outrage on human nature, "for custom hath sated it to the eye." Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers! oh! why sleep ye en the brink of the roaring volcano, because a flower grows upon the margin, and the eye of love is blind to the vice that now only appears like a burning spot of beauty on the cheek! Only seventeen! and disguised in liquor!—Not drunk, you say, but disguised. He only takes an occasional glass! Don't believe it! No young man ever yet took "an occasional glass," who did not create *another occasion* for another glass. Only seventeen! and drunk at a tavern! Is there a power in the human mind, to enable men to avoid destruction, and will not that power rise into action when told that a youth of seventeen will pour down his throat the fiery serpents of death, vice, crime, and insanity! Look well to your own *habits*, but also look with kind anxiety to the *habits* of your friends, and those you love. Mothers! look ye to the habits of your sons! Have no consideration for the excuse of an "*occasional glass.*"—Sisters! look well to your brothers! The midnight robber comes not with a more deadly, silent, and stealthy step than the *vice of intemperance* disguised in hues of beauty. Beware of the rose tint on the cheek of him who handles the cup. *The fiend's* first approach is one not so revolting. He comes dressed in smiles. He remains frowning with terror. He triumphs in the howlings of discord. Music and dancing announce his approach. The pall of death, and the chords rattling around the coffin, celebrate his triumphs!

YOUR SONS SHOULD LEARN A TRADE.—There is an important feature in the regulations of a master Mechanic, which is frightful to some kind parent's hearts:—And that is, the five to seven years apprenticeship the boy that learns a trade must submit to. But it is an excellent discipline. It takes the lad at a critical period of life, when he perhaps has a disposition averse to steady employment—when he is inclined to roam at large amid the contaminating influences about him, and puts upon him a steady round of duties, severe at first, but soon becoming from habit agreeable; and when his steady habits and industry are established, he comes forth a man, the master of a trade, of fixed principles and good habits—a blessing to himself and to the community.

If parents would but look at the right, they would declare that, had they many sons, they should learn trades. Contrast the youth just alluded to, with him, who having a horror of an apprenticeship is allowed to run at large. At the most critical moment of life, for forming habits, he is forming those that are the reverse of industry. He is not fitting himself to be a man, by wearing away his boyhood in idleness. The partial parent sees this, yet has not fortitude to avert it. At twenty-one years of age, when the first named lad comes out a good mechanic, it is wonderful if the other has not fastened habits upon himself that will be his ruin, if he be not ruined already! More than one excellent man in our community, can say with thankfulness, that it turned out so, that to his half dozen years' apprenticeship he knows he is indebted for the habits of industry and sobriety he has obtained. That when he was put out to a trade, he was on a pivot, as it were.—Had it not been for the firmness of his parents, he would not have become an apprentice. If he had not done so, scarcely a doubt he has that he should have been a ruined lad, ere his minority expired. This was the turning point.

A certain Justice of the Peace would never hear but one of the parties in a case before him, "because," as he said, "it always puzzled him when he heard both!"

MATERNAL AFFECTION.—The charms of woman are certainly many and powerful. The expanding rose, just bursting into beauty, has an irresistible bewitchingness; the blooming bride led triumphantly to the hymeneal altar, awakens admiration and interest, and the blush of her cheek fills with delight; but the charm of maternity is more sublime than all these.

Heaven has imprinted on the mother's face, something beyond this world, something which claims kindred with the skies—angelic smiles, the tender look, the waking, watchful eye, which keeps the fond vigil over her slumbering babe.

These are objects which neither the pencil nor the chisel can touch, which poetry fails to exalt: which the most eloquent tongue in vain would eulogise, and of which all description becomes ineffective. In the heart of man lies this lovely picture; it lives in his sympathies, it reigns in his affections, his eye looks around in vain for such another object on earth.

Maternity — extatic sound! so twined around our hearts, that they must cease to throb ere we can forget; 'tis our first love, 'tis part of our religion. Nature has set the mother on such a principle, that our infant eyes and arms are first uplifted, to it we cling in manhood, we almost worship it in old age. He who can enter an apartment, and behold the babe feeding on its mother's beauty—nourished by the tide of life which flows from her generous veins, without a panting bosom and grateful eye, is no man, but a monster.

SECURING A COMPETENCY.—The pursuit of a competence is commendable, and favorable to many virtues; it implies industry, prudence, integrity, and temperance; for without the benefit of all these, it is as little likely to succeed, as the attempt to fill a sieve with water. Its results are, to enable you to provide for the comforts of those dearest to you, and to exercise the best feelings of our nature in ministering to the destitute. Even the thoughtless Burns advises to secure a competence:

"Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Not for a train attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent."

But the pursuit of wealth, for the mere sake of wealth, is a far different thing.—It is in this sense that love of money has been declared the root of all evil. Its fruits are meanness, injustice and dishonesty; and with whatever success it may be crowned, it cannot command respect, or bring happiness.

UNPARALLELED PARSIMONY.—Monsieur Vandeville was one of the most remarkable men in Paris for his avarice. In the year 1735, he was worth one million sterling. At the age of 32, he contracted a fever, which obliged him to send, for the first time in his life, for a surgeon to bleed him, who asking him ten-pence for the operation, was dismissed. He sent for an apothecary, but he was as high in his demand. He sent for a barber, who at length agreed to undertake the operation for three-pence a time; but, says the stingy fellow, "how often will it be requisite to bleed?" "Three times," answered the barber. "I have determined to adopt a cheaper way—take the whole quantity you design to take at three times at once, and it will save me sixpence;" this being insisted upon, he lost 24 ounces of blood which caused his dissolution in a few days, and he left his immense property to the King.

WOOD HARD AS IRON OR STONE.—A method to render wood as hard as iron has recently been found out in England, and, from experiments made, it is probable railroads will be constructed of it hereafter. Heavy iron rails cost $7000 per mile, wooden rails prepared after the new method will not exceed $400. An experiment in England with this rail of a year's duration on the Dover road has been endured without any perceptible injury.—The method of preparing the timber is simple in itself. The pieces of rail are introduced into an immense iron cylinder, the air exhausted by a pump. The pores are then filled with a solution of the sulphate of iron, and afterward the wood is placed in a similar vacuum in a solution of the muriate of lime, which coming in contact with the sulphate of iron within the wood, decomposes it and forms an insoluble sulphate of lime. Thus the wood becomes thoroughly impregnated with stone, as hard as iron, through a simple chemical process. [*N. Y. Express.*

The Force of Habit was remarkably exemplified recently in Kentucky, on the occasion of a funeral. The bereaved wife and a few neighbors, sat waiting the arrival of the people, all solemnly idle.—The widow, becoming very uneasy, after sitting idle a few minutes, cried out—"Kate! bring me my knitting, *I may as well take a few stitches while the crowd is gathering!*"

Some wicked old bachelor has said, that let us marry who we will, we afterwards find that we have not wedded our *intended*.

SCRAPS FROM "THE TOWN."

Juvenility.—We were very much amused at the *naivette* of a little boy, a kinsfellow of our own, not quite four years old. He was about going to bed, and was kneeling at his mother's feet, with his hands clasped between hers, as she recited to him the Lord's prayer, which he repeated after her—"Our father which art in Heaven"—"Our father which art in Heaven"—"Hallowed be thy name"—"Hallowed be thy name"—"Give us this day our daily bread"—"Give us this day our daily"—"O! mama, let's ask for cakes!"

He strayed away with his little sister (a year or two older than himself) and they got lost, and occasioned considerable difficulty before they were found. When he was brought to his mother, she gave him a spanking, at which he bawled most lustily, and on her releasing him and taking hold of his sister, to inflict a like punishment, the little fellow, with his eyes streaming tears, magnanimously cried out—"O! ma, please don't whip sister Clara. *Whip me again.* A noble boy!

We understand "the Town" is dead. We thought it much too smart to live long. [*Express.*

If this be a correct rule for ascertaining the longevity of newspapers, the Express will never die.

Misfortune is your true aquafortis—it eats up the dross of our natures, but leaves the pure gold unsullied.

Lightning never strikes but once in the same place—therefore let a man whose first wife was a good one never marry again.

The thermometer in our office is to let—altho' we should not like to see it highered.

The *gentility* of being considered unsound in health, is the most incomprehensible of modern follies.

A briefless lawyer ought never to be blamed, for it is decidedly wrong to blame a man without a *cause*.

LAW.—Law is but an incumbrance to good morals, except so far as it is necessary to redress personal wrongs. Truth and the friends of it can govern the world just as well as not, if they will but follow the directions of the author of truth. But if, withdrawing their confidence in truth itself, or becoming too indolent to use it, they substitute law, or money, or political alliances, the sceptre will soon pass to opposite hands. It used to be thought in New England, that people might be made to support and attend upon religious worship. But the laws worked badly, religion declined, and the laws were overthrown. Since then the people have been returning to their duty; and now, to attend religious service, has become almost necessary to a character for good sense and citizenship. Formerly intemperance was forbidden by law, and the selling of intoxicating drinks also, under all sorts of penalties. But intemperance increased until we were almost a nation of drunkards. In that desperate state of the case, good men were drawn to the only efficient protection "moral suasion;" and we are now much nearer a nation of cold water drinkers, than we were under the dominion of the statute law.

VACCINATION.—Now that public attention is somewhat directed to the danger of small-pox, it may be profitable to read the following remarks from the London Lancet, on the subject of vaccination:

"The general conclusions drawn by Dr. Ritzins, of Stockholm, from his observations of small-pox, and the effects of vaccination in Sweden, are these:—The protection afforded by vaccination from the close of the second year of life, against the contagion of the variolous points, usually lasts unimpaired to the end of the thirteenth year or so; after this period it begins to lose its effect, and gradually becomes more and more uncertain to the twentieth or twenty-first year of life. For the next four or five years, the disposition to the small-pox seems almost to have recovered its original integrity; and this state of liability continues unimpaired up to the age of forty years or so. At about this epoch of life it begins to approach nearer and nearer to the limit of its existence—which it reaches, in the majority of cases, about the fiftieth year—the period when the general revolution of the human body commences to take place."

SHORT AND SWEET.—Divers plans of courtship are laid down in books, but none takes our fancy like the following, adopted by a couple recently: "Miss Adela, will you marry me?" "Well, Tom, I suppose I must." "I'll be much obliged if you will." Then he kissed her, and she kissed him in return, and the business was settled.

THEORY VS. PRACTICE.—Thompson, the author of The Seasons, wrote, *in bed*, his beautiful rhapsody on early rising, commencing—"Falsely luxurious! will not men awake?"

LUCID.—"Father wants you to send him two yards of black broadcloth; he don't care what color it is, and when he kills his pig last week, he'll pay you for what you owe him."

WAR.

For several years past the nations of Europe have been talking of war, and threatening each other in all directions. France menaced England, because she was deceived in relation to the quintuple treaty. In her turn England was exasperated because France, prompted by the American Minister at Paris, escaped the toils that the wily Englishman had spread for her in relation to the right of search. Now, war, on all hands, is admitted to be one of the greatest curses that ever afflicted a nation, but at the same time, when a nation like England perceives that her greatness, relatively to that of other nations, is diminishing in time of peace, her statesmen begin to cast about them for the means at least of retaining their position. The geographical position of England placed her at the head of maritime and commercial nations, and during the long wars of the Continent, she became the workshop of the world. Thirty years of peace have witnessed an advance in the commerce and industrial pursuits of other nations more rapid than hers, and she is losing rank as the first commercial nation. The *London Quarterly*, therefore, admits that "nevertheless, it is quite possible for nations to be so circumstanced, that the prolongation of peace, instead of being a blessing, must prove a curse to them, because it must diminish their honor." Now, however jealous England may become of the advancement of other nations, war is no longer the means by which her supremacy can be restored or sustained. Since the last war, events have transpired which make the next an experiment, the results of which are unknown, and cannot be estimated, because they have no precedent. When France went to war with all Europe, for the purpose of preventing the interference of foreigners with a people struggling with their own government, it was a matter of military calculation, according to the then state of the science, that assembled Europe would put down revolutionary France.—An unexpected event, however, reversed the state of affairs. This was the appearance on the field of a young soldier, who had discovered a new principle of military science, and he conquered all Europe before he had taught others the secret. His success and victories were apparent to all, yet no glimpse of light appeared to guide the speculation of the soldier or the statesman on the causes of these results, until near the close of the career of the "tamer of kings," "done to death" by that English oligarchy now so near an extinction.

The discovery of Napoleon decided the ultimate independence of Europeon nations, by demonstrating that the central is the good military position for a vigorous government. His discovery, and its results apply, however, apply to land. England was not rivalled at sea, over which, by the number of her ships, and the superiority of her numerous seamen, she reigned supreme. A new discovery has now, however, been made in naval warfare, and that is the applicability of steam power to national vessels; and its effects upon the maritime influence of England will probably be similar to that of Napoleon upon the military power of the Continent. The supremacy on the ocean will, among the nations of Europe at least, be divided by France. If she has fewer sailors, she has as brave material and excels in scientific and engineering attainments. At a distance, steam fleets, from their nature, cannot long be maintained for offence, while for defence they are invincible. The alternative of a war does not therefore afford England the means of maintaining her rank—on the other hand it will only hasten the loss of it. The internal contentions of Europe have ceased, and the commercial and industrial principle is in full activity. Twenty years more of peace may advance the nations of Europe as much above England as she has heretofore been above them. A rupture would not now disturb the advance of industry in Europe, while it would be ruinous to that of England. Of all nations of the earth, England has most to lose, and least to gain, by war. Nevertheless, like her blundering hero, Wellington, who on more than one occasion, exposed himself to the alternative of a barren victory or a complete overthrow, she may rush into danger without his good luck to get her out of it. [*N. Y. News.*

It is not customary at the present day to say, "there's the devil to pay and no pitch hot;" the fashionable phrase being—"there is a certain liability due to the 'old gentleman in black,' and no bituminous matter of an elevated temperature on hand to liquidate the obligation."

In Dresden, a little ragged child was heard to call from the window of a mean house, to her neighbor—"Please, Mrs. Miller, mother sends her best compliments, and if it's fine weather would you go a begging with her to-morrow?"

The Post Office Department at Washington has adopted arrangements for establishing mail lines to Texas and to the Pacific coast.